

FAITH'S FIRM RESOLVE

NO. 2164

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 18, 1890,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only."
Psalm 71:16.*

This is a psalm of David's old age and we will carefully notice the characteristic feature of it. It is not addressed to men concerning God, but it is addressed to God Himself, for He was David's dearest friend. Our psalms and hymns are not for man's criticism, but for the Lord's acceptance.

This is the tenor of the psalm; David has been with his God and he is now ready for anything. This grand old man, in his later days, is exposed to enemies quite as fierce as those which he had to encounter in his earlier times, but instead of gathering his friends together and conversing with them, and seeking their counsel, he gets quite alone and begins to cry, "In You, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion." Trusting alone in God makes us grandly independent towards men. The man of God shuts the door; he realizes that the Lord is in the chamber with him and he speaks to Him, saying, "Be You my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: You have given commandments to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress." He pours out his heart before God and pleads with Him, "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help." It is a delightful sight! There are two in the room, though you can only see one with the natural eye. The man whom you see, discerns another, a great and glorious One and he talks with Him "as a man talks with his friend."

Is this a fancy picture to you, my brother, my sister? Is this merely a sketch of something which happened ages ago? Have *you* not often been one in that scene? I know that I have been there and I trust that it has been so with you. These are the choicest joys we know; these lone communings with Jehovah, our God! That room where we are alone with God is the nearest to heaven of any place between here and Paradise! I wish that we more often enjoyed communion with closed doors. We might. Why don't we? Whatever we gain by occupying our time otherwise can, at the best, be only compared to silver; but this is the golden way of spending our hours! When we are with God, we have the all-in-all for company and He fills our minds better than a thousand finite beings could do. The Lord our God has filled our heart and filled our room; and filled the universe for us; and we are overflowing with blessedness!

It is good to come here and mingle with God's people in public worship. As my well-beloved brother, Mr. Williams, said in prayer just now; many a Thursday night have the saints of God come in here burdened and they have gone away lightened, for God has met with them! Our Thursday nights are little Sabbaths in the middle of the week; resting places between the Sundays; oases in the desert of our toil; but there is something closer, and less likely to be a mere form; our private meetings with God. I pray you, make many secret appointments with your Lord and keep them! Have many trysting places where you and your Well-Beloved meet. I am certain that it will be imperative upon you to meet Him whenever you are in sore trouble; your sense of need will drive you to it. I do not know that Jacob ever spent a whole night with God till he was about to meet his brother Esau and was in great fear that he would smite the mother with the children. Then it was that he said—

*"With You all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day."*

I guarantee you Jacob was a greater gainer by that fright than if he had never heard a whisper of opposition! It was well for him that he had an Esau, with armed men, to drive him to his God. He could say afterwards, "It was good for me to have been afflicted." Anything that brings us into close fellowship with God, however evil in itself, works for us the grandest form of good. Now, if there are any here very much like David. If they are growing old and if, being aged, they are also surrounded by

slander, persecution and reproach, let them see what David did. If they are met by great difficulties and even by malicious adversaries, let them go where David went! Go and sit before the Lord and pour out your heart before Him. I think I see David sitting there, naturally full of sorrow; an old man, compassed with infirmities, and at the same time, bowed down with troubles; and there he is *rejoicing* in the faithful God, of whom he says, "O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until this time have I declared Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have showed Your strength unto this generation, and Your power to everyone that is to come." He has realized the presence of his God in secret and his troubles are laid before God in prayer. Gradually they subside. He began to speak very hopefully. Now he rises from hope to a joyful confidence. The old man goes on talking there, as some would say, "to himself." But we know better; he was conversing with his God; and before that hallowed interview is over he has reached such a happy state of mind that he says, "My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto You." His fingers long to join his lips and he is looking for his psaltery and his harp that instrumental music may aid his tongue and that so he may praise God with all his might! Communion with God is a great maker of music so that he who went into the chamber halting, comes out leaping. He that meets God with tears in his eyes, comes forth from holy solitude with songs in his mouth. May it be so with you! When you are far away from any house of prayer where you are likely to hear what will comfort and bless you, go to God straightway and tell Him all that is in your heart. Forget minister and congregation and go straight to Him who is far greater than churches and pastors! Pour out your troubles where they will meet with divine sympathy. Confess your trust into His ear who is never weary of His people's voice, and you shall have found the greatest strength that is to be found this side of heaven! And you shall sing, "You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side."

Taking as my text this particular verse in David's talk with God, I want you to notice, first of all, *his resolve*; "I will go." Secondly, *his reliance*; "I will go in the strength of the Lord God." And thirdly, *his message*, which he intends to deliver always: "I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only."

I. Now, here is, first, HIS RESOLVE. "*I will go*," he says.

From this it is clear that *he will not sit still*. Look! He has come a long way already and he is getting weary and faint. The flesh suggests to him that he has had enough of it, while the devil hints to him that he has done too much already and that the best thing he can do now is to give up struggling, battling, warring and contending, and just sit down and let things go as they will. Do you not hear the advice of unbelief, "Let affairs drift. You cannot help yourself, old man! You have got into a very sad condition. Give up your confidence in heaven. Perhaps you have been under a delusion all these years and trust in this God of yours is sheer fanaticism. Do not go on with it! Be reasonable, like the many that are round about you who are criticizing and amusing themselves; and while professing everything, are believing nothing. Give up the contest and drop the sword with which you contend for your Master and let things go as they may." So whispers Satan. So murmurs the flesh. So advises the worldly friend. The brave old man gets up, and cries, "No, I will go! I will not sit still. I will not give it up. I have not finished my lifework. I have more to do. I have further testimony to bear for my Master. I shall not idly quit the field, but still bear the battle's brunt. I shall not quit the pilgrimage; I will go, even now, though it is with tottering footsteps. Bring me my staff. I will go with the rest of the chosen company. I have not been behind in the marches of the past, for I have led the way as a leader of God's people. I have sung unto His name and taught the host to sing that His mercy endures forever. Shall I now turn tail? Shall I now linger in the rear? No," he says, "I will go." Look! He girds himself once again to follow the Lord and he goes forward as bravely as when he first started on his pilgrim way!

That picture is no imaginary sketch. It has occurred to ourselves. It is a likeness taken but a few days ago. Dear friend, it may be a photograph of *you*. Some of you of very cheerful spirit, always bright and jubilant, do not know what it is to get discouraged. But there are others of another temperament who at times are sorely put to it and they are tempted to abstain from the Lord's service. Prudence makes the man say, "Really, I have undertaken more than I can accomplish." As our dear friend said in prayer, there are many of the Lord's servants who have work to do for which they feel quite unfit and, while they are under such a feeling, the hint comes to them, "Get out of it, or you will come down with a run."

You are like a man walking on a tightrope; if you once get to the other end alive, never try it again, or you will regret it. That simple reliance on God, why, it is like standing on the top of a church spire; it needs a very cool head, and a miraculous nerve. You will make a slip one of these days, and then religion will be laughed at through you." So says unbelief! But it is a grand thing if, in the moment of discouragement, the child of God can gather himself up again, gird up the loins of his mind, and in holy sobriety, hope to the end and say, in the language of the text, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will not be kept back by the world, the flesh, or the devil."

It is my impression that David meant, "*I will go to war.*" He was a man of war from his youth up and, of course, after many years of fighting, which is by no means pleasant work; and after many serious risks, it might naturally suggest itself to the aged man that he had better quit the tented field. Yet the old man would go. In fact, he went to battle so long that, one day, in the midst of the fight, he fainted and then his people insisted upon it that he should not go any more, for they saw that it would be out of all character to let the old man expose himself to certain death. Did they not say to him, "You are worth 10,000 of us"? If he were to fall, the very light of Israel would be quenched. But there was "fight" in the old lion till the very last. The same spirit that made him go as a boy to fight with Goliath still burned in him when he became an old man, and he still said, "I will go." When he could not literally go to any physical conflict, you can see that to the end he fought for God and for truth, by his laws, his government, his influence, and his prayers. When he could not do one thing he did another. His enemies that gathered about him to destroy him found that they had a very difficult task before them, for it was not true, though they said it, that the Lord was no longer on his side. They told a lie when they uttered that cruel taunt, "God has forsaken him." And they proposed more than they could carry out when they said, "Persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him." David turned a bold front towards them to the very last, setting his face like a flint, resolving that he would administer justice and maintain the cause of God in Israel as long as he lived.

Well, dear friends, you are not called to be soldiers in the literal sense; the most of you, at any rate; but you are called to be soldiers of the cross. These are fighting times and no one must back out of the conflict. Be not cowards! Be not neutrals. Show your colors and fear no opposition. Every day wear the red cross on your arm, by avowing your faith in the atoning blood. Still have a good word for Christ and the old, old gospel. Be not ashamed of the doctrines of grace, nor of those who make a stand for them. Still "contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints." And still say; "I will go in the strength of the Lord God, to make mention of His righteousness, and of it only."

The text may be used in many senses. "I will go in the strength of the Lord," may mean that *he will go forward and make progress in divine things*. I will go on studying the Word of God to get a clearer apprehension of its meaning. I will go forward pleading with the Lord to prove more effectually the power of prayer. I will go on subduing evil habits. I will put down, by God's strength, this sin and that. I will go forth conquering and to conquer against the world, the flesh and the devil, where ever I am called to encounter. I will not be content with present attainments. I will not rest in any joy that I have yet known, nor be content with any measure of holiness which God has granted me. As the eagle cries, "Superior," and spreads its wings to meet the sun, so will I rise higher and higher, singing—

*"Nearer, my God, to You,
Nearer to You."*

I know that some think it perilous work to climb into the higher form of spiritual life and to aim even at perfection, but I will not flinch from it. If I do not reach it, yet will I *aspire* to it. I will go. "I will go in the strength of the Lord." Don't you think that large numbers of God's people are content with a very poor form of spiritual life because they do not think it possible to advance further? They have little joy and little strength because they are content with the joy and strength they have and do not aspire to more. We make a great mistake, dear friends, some of us, as to the whole style of our life! I met with a story, which seemed to me a rather pretty one. There was a young woman, fair to look upon, who was seen by a very wealthy man who determined to make her his wife. She had been brought up to habits of rigid economy, for the family was straitened in circumstances. Her father was not of the very poorest, certainly, but still poor enough. And on her marriage day he gave her all that he could afford, namely, five pounds, and that was put into the bank. Her husband, on that day, told her that he had placed money

in the bank in her name, and he handed her a checkbook, that she might draw out whatever money she desired. Well, having been properly brought up, she spent her money very, very carefully. Five pounds was an enormous sum to her, and she felt frightened at running through so vast a sum. She found, however, that in the circle in which she was called to move, her five pounds was at last gone, and so she even ventured to draw a check for 10 pounds. In considerable fear she went down in the carriage to the bank to see whether they really would give her 10 pounds all at a time. And when she got it she was surprised and overjoyed. She drew again, until at last she had actually spent 50 pounds! One day her husband said to her, "Don't you know how to manage a checkbook, my dear? I scarcely understand your account at the bank." She modestly replied, "I hope I have not been extravagant." "You little goose," he said, "I put a thousand pounds in the bank for you, and I thought that you would soon spend it. Most women would. But instead of that, you have only spent 50 pounds. You cannot behave yourself as my wife on such a pittance. Remember, you may be a poor man's daughter, but you are a rich man's wife; so just begin to spend according to my riches, and not according to your father's economy."

This is our case in reference to our Lord Jesus. We know we are a poor man's children. My original father "broke" long ago. There was nothing left of all the family estate. When father Adam was in business, he became a bankrupt and he left us nothing but a sea of debt. But then we are married to King Jesus, who is heir of all things and He puts the checkbook of the promises into our hands that we may draw from the riches of divine grace! Do not let us live according to our natural quality, but let us live according to our supernatural elevation, and begin to spend according to the wealth of our Husband! Very few women need encouragement to spend money; but very many Christian women and Christian men need very great encouragement to draw upon the goodness of God; and to live at that high and noble rate of divine grace to which they are entitled by the election of God, by the call of the Holy Spirit and by their heavenly union with the Lord Jesus Christ! I wish that we could pluck up courage and say, "I will go in for great grace, eminent holiness and close conformity to Christ. I will draw upon His riches in glory and spend at a royal rate. Why should I not show forth all that grace can do? Is there any reason why I should be weak and wavering? I would be as David, yes, as my Lord. Yes, I will rouse myself, the Holy Spirit helping me, and I will seek the highest and best things that a Christian can know. I will go."

Let us cheerfully use this text *whenever any service is proposed to us*. A young man has been asked to preach at a small cottage meeting. He has been hesitating during the last two or three days whether he shall or not. I want him to feel that if this is a work in which he can glorify God he should say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God." There is a sister, here, who has been invited to take a class of young women. She thinks that she is hardly fitted for the Bible class proposed to her and yet she is the only person available and evidently the finger of God points to her. I want her to say, with David, "I will go in the strength of the Lord." Have you rendered no service to your Savior? Have I the unhappiness to be addressing some member of a church who has really done nothing for the Redeemer? Do you understand what the gospel is? Do you know what its effect upon the heart is? If so, how can you remain idle? I do not understand you or your religion! A man who is saved; who is *saved*; who has no longer to live with a view to his own salvation but is saved; what can he do but feel, "Bought with Your blood, my gracious Lord, I belong to You and now I must spend all my days in serving You"? It is an instinct of the Christian life to wish to be doing something to glorify God and to save the souls of others! If you have not that instinct, I should question whether you are really born of God at all. Can hard hearts have been renewed? Will the Lord own sluggards as His children? Did the heavenly Husbandman really plant an utterly barren tree? Be it so, that, up to now you have done nothing. May the Holy Spirit at once awaken you and may you say, before you leave this Tabernacle; "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Your righteousness"!

We have also before us *a man who will go to suffering with holy resignation*. A sister, just now, sent a letter asking us to pray for her while she undergoes an operation. May the Lord sustain her! It is a prayer we often have to put up in this large congregation for some of the very dearest and best among us. Dear friends, the text is for you with regard to the suffering you have to encounter; may you go forward to it without fear! Some of us have to take turns at the two forms of appointed exercise; we are sometimes serving, sometimes suffering; and occasionally we carry a pair of baskets and both work and

suffer. The Lord will be with us under every form of trial; He will sustain us under personal pain, or bereavement, or business care, or cruel persecution. Therefore, believer, do not linger, but say, "I will go, I will go"—

*"If but my fainting heart be blest
With Your sweet Spirit for its guest,
My God, to You I leave the rest;
'Your will be done!'"*

Grand words were those of our Lord when, the supper being ended and the next thing was the bloody sweat, He said, "Arise, let us go from here"! He does not merely wait for the trial to come, but He advances to take up His cross and to bear the grief which was laid upon Him by His Father. So let us say tonight, "I do not know how dark the rest of my way may be. I see that it is covered with thorns and briars, but in the Lord's name, solemnly, in syllables spoken each one of them in deep determination, I declare that I will go in the strength of the Lord."

Beloved, may it be so *when we come to die!* In a short time, unless the Lord shall come, you and I will have to go upstairs and gather up our feet in the bed and die to meet our fathers' God. Well, if it should happen to be some disease which gives us warning and opportunity to think beforehand; we will go onward, with death in full view; without any trepidation in the strength of the Lord! Some of us know what it is to lie for days and weeks, looking into eternity, till our eyes have been able to gaze steadily on death and all the future. We have grown so used to the prospect and so peaceful in reference to it that we have almost been sorry to come back again to life and its trials and sins! When we are so prepared and even so jubilant at the prospect of passing into the world of spirits, we almost reluctantly turn our face earthward again! When the time does actually arrive, our God will give us grace to say, "I will go. I will go. My Lord has called me over the river, and I will go. I hear His sweet and mighty voice saying, 'Arise, My love, My fair , and come away'! I answer to it gladly, My Master, I will come." I will go in the strength of the Lord God. Perhaps I have said enough upon this point. May we be ready to march when the trumpet sounds! Without fear or question may we say at once, "Where He leads me I will follow."

II. Now, secondly, notice HIS RELIANCE. He is ready to go, but he tells us how; "*I will go in the strength of the Lord God.*"

He would go glorying in strength already received. Deep down in the middle of the words (I cannot give you the critical way in which we come at it, but it is so), David means that while others put on their garments and array themselves in beauty, he will put on the strengths of Jehovah (it is in the plural), and they shall make garments for him. It is a wonderful picture to me. While others glory in another strength, he takes God's might as it has been displayed in his past career and he puts it on as his armor. He would not wear Saul's armor, or any fabric of carnal wisdom, neither now nor when he went against Goliath. He said to the giant, "I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts." He put on as a coat of mail the secret strength of God which he had verified and demonstrated in his own past career when he slew the lion and the bear. What a wonderful thing it is for a child of God to stand clothed with those garments of glory and beauty which are made up of what God has worked *in* him and worked *for* him! How happy is he to be renewed in might by remembering the strength of God which he has up to now experienced! These are a fit marching dress for his soul to wear! He may go forward to his future without fearing; who has such a past to reflect upon!

David means that *he would go relying upon a strength which did not alter.* The Source from which we draw our strength, dear friends, is as full of omnipotence as when David drew from it; certainly as full as when we went to it in our younger days! Our own strength is much less as our years increase, but it is not so with the Lord strong and mighty! Where we could have traversed a county, we now weary with a mile. Old men find that they cannot do what they once did, but God can do all things evermore. Our own strength is a cistern soon drained dry, but we need not thirst for we can tap the great "deep that lies under." Our faith knows how to bore an Artesian well when surface water fails. Let us bore deep, and then the stream will flow in summer and in winter, never frozen, and never parched; and we may be always "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." So David means that he would go in the all-sufficiency and the immutable power of the Most High.

He felt that *he would go, also, in a power which sanctified his going*. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God." Where will a man go in that strength? To the theater? Verily, it is a sort of constructive blasphemy to imagine a Christian's going there in the strength of the Lord! Will he enter upon a speculation in which he will, in all probability, rob other people if he succeeds and injure others if he is disappointed? No, not in the strength of the Lord God! There are a thousand things that a man could *not* think of doing in the strength of the Lord God, and yet professing men venture upon them, to their sin and shame. In the strength of the devil a man might attempt many of the doubtful enterprises and amusements of modern professors, but in the strength of the Lord God, no! It were profanity to talk of it. Do you see what a limit this puts upon a Christian's action? And yet it is no limit which in the least restricts his gracious liberty. It is such a boundary as he himself would set up. You are strong to do what you *ought* to do and it is only what you ought to do that you would wish to attempt in the strength of the Lord God. You are weak if you transgress, for the strength is gone from you when you attempt to do what would dishonor God. And is not this as it should be? Is it not just as you wish it to be? Come, beloved, you see that not only did David get strength, but he obtained holiness, also, from the Lord his God for, if he would go in the holy strength of the most holy God, he could not go amiss.

Again, in this text I notice that *he is confident as to the sufficiency and adaptation of God's strength to every trial or work to which he might be called*. The Hebrew, being plural, hints at this. "I will go in *the strengths* of the Lord God." If I shall require mental vigor, God can give it to me. If I shall need physical strength, He can give it to me. If I shall need spiritual power, He can give it to me. If the particular demand is a clear sight that I may detect and baffle the cunning of the enemy, He can give it to me. If I require courage and quick resolve, He can give them to me. If my special need is firmness of mind in the day of temptation, He can give it to me. If it is a patient temper, He can give it to me. Nothing is needed by a believer but that which the strength of God supplies when it is needed! As our days our strength shall be. We shall find the supply always equal to the demand.

"Oh," says one, "my way is very strange. I could not tell you the singular difficulty of my case." Dear friend, I do not wish to know the particulars, but I am sure that however strange the case is to me and to you, it is not new to God! If you go in the strength of the Lord God, you have exactly that which is suited for your perplexing path of pilgrimage. It is one of the miracles of God that to each man He is just such a God as he needs. It is like the Welsh woman that I spoke to you about on Monday night. She would have it that Jesus Christ was not a Jew; she was certain that He was a Welshman! But how was that? How could the Lord Jesus Christ be a Welshman? She answered, "He always speaks to my heart in Welsh." Truly, good woman, He always speaks to *my* heart in English, and he speaks to the heart of each man in his own mother tongue so that the miracle of Pentecost is repeated in our fellowship with Jesus, and every man hears in his own language the wonderful grace of God! Jesus knows how to adapt His truth, not only to each nationality, but to each personality, and to each peculiarity of that personality. Jehovah is the special God and the special strength of each individual Christian. He is my God and my father's God, as well as your God; and no other could be as expressly suitable to me as I find the Lord my God to be. It is a wonderful thing and we ought to render personal thanksgiving for it.

Now I will dwell for just a minute practically upon this. This text, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God," should rise to the lips of everybody here who is *engaging in new service*. You are attempting what you have never tried before. Come, now, see to every buckle of your harness and every portion of your armor. You can see to it all at once by saying, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God." Possibly you are in great weariness tonight. "I cannot do any more," you say. "The fact is, I am beginning to feel that I am an old man." Yes, but perhaps you are feeling this in two ways; there is another old man besides old age; and when you begin to feel weary in well doing, may not the old nature have a finger in it as well as the old body? Now is the time to rouse yourself out of lethargy, shake off sinful sloth, and declare with determination, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

Or, possibly, *you have come to a fresh peril*. You have reached a very hard bit of the road where real danger lurks. I remember that, in going over the Grimsel, we came to a place which was called "Hell Place." It was a narrow road by the side of a precipitous gorge. The way was very slippery, and the horses began to slip about. We soon dismounted, and then we had to walk over a bit of rock which was as smooth as ice. You come to such a place now and then in the road of life, and you feel more than half

inclined to go back. But you must not go back. Believers may not go back. It is written, "If any man draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." You must, tonight, put down your foot and resolve that you will never turn to the right hand nor to the left, but keep your face forever Zion-ward. Say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

Or, perhaps, *you are going away from us altogether*, dear friend. You have come in here for the last time tonight, for you are going to live far away in the country. Or you have already taken your passage to New Zealand, or Australia, or Canada. Very well, go in the strength of the Lord God. That is the way to go to unknown lands! I do not think that a Christian ought to go downstairs in his own house in any other strength, and certainly he should not take a journey on which the rest of his life may depend without having sought guidance, or without fixing his reliance upon God!

"But," says one, "there is no journey for me. I fear that I am going to suffer a long illness. *I feel that great afflictions are coming upon me.*" Very well, go in the strength of the Lord God. When my deacon behind me here, whom you all know and love so well; my dear brother Mr. William Olney; had to undergo operation after operation, we prayed for him, and it is wonderful how the Lord sustained him by giving him calm faith. He was not half as troubled about himself as we were. I know that he said in his heart, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God," and he was enabled to go on from one operation to another without fear. And here he is among us, still, to serve his Lord and Master! Be you also calm, dear brothers and sisters, when your trial hour comes.

"Oh, it is not that!" says one, "but mine is a miserable family trouble. There is a lot in it that is wrong; mischief I cannot tell to anybody. I seem to get no help." Well, go in the strength of the Lord God. That is the right way to go. If you have nobody else to help you, go in His strength. I told you of a good woman who was speaking about Mr. Hudson Taylor years ago. She said, "Poor Mr. Hudson Taylor! I do not think that he can depend upon any of the missionary societies to help him. He has nobody to trust to but God." She said it in that kind of style, too; "nobody to trust to *but God.*" And whom do you want to trust to but God? It is a glorious thing to get all the dog shores knocked away so that the ship may be launched from the stocks, and may float upon the great ocean! We are apt to be hampered by friends. They stand between us and the Lord. I know I have been so hampered, but I am finding deliverance from these poor creature confidences in a very painful but effective manner. I have lost a great many on whose fidelity I thought I could depend. But since I depend on the Lord all the more, I am a gainer by ungrateful desertions. "Oh!" you say, "do not talk like that." I speak the words of soberness. It is a mercy to be saved from our friends. I believe that oftentimes our trust in friends makes us live like frequenters of lodging houses who herd together in a miserable old shanty. When our friends are gone, and thus the old shanty comes down, what then? Why, we go off to a palace! We live at once in the palace of *assurance* with God, resting in Him along. Oh, it is a poor life; the life that depends upon things! It is a poor life that is buttressed and shored up by this and that; but that is the *best* life which dwells under God's sky, and has no fear that the sky-blue arch will fall! As the heavens stand without shores and unsupported, except by the word of God, so stands the man of God! Remember how Luther realized this? When they said that Duke George would oppose him, he said, "If it rained Duke Georges, I would not care, so long as God is with me!"—

***"Fear Him, you saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear.
Make you His service your delight,
He'll make your needs His care."***

"I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

III. Now I have only a minute to speak upon the last point. I will save that for another time, I think. David informs us as to HIS MESSAGE; "*I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only.*" The only testimony that he was going to bear for the rest of his life would be a testimony to the righteousness of the Lord God. Here was enough work for a lifetime and here was the man who was at home in the work!

I cannot go into it. Therefore I say this; Bear your testimony to the righteousness of God in *providence*. Stand to it that the Lord never does wrong. He is never mistaken, but whatever He ordains is, and must be, unquestionably right. Bear witness, next, to His righteousness in salvation, that He does

not save without an atonement; that He does not put away sin without being strictly just. That He does by no means spare the guilty, but has laid on Christ that which was due to human sin that He might be “just and the justifier of him that believes.” Go on, then, to tell everybody that the righteousness which saves you is the righteousness of God, not your own righteousness. There is no such thing as human righteousness; the two words make up a contradiction. Any righteousness that you could gain by your own works would be filthy rags at the best; and filthy rags are not *righteousness*. We have no personal merit. We are justified by *imputed righteousness*. Make mention of the righteousness of Christ which covers you from head to foot—

*“Jesus, Your blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.
‘Midst flaming worlds, in You arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.”*

Declare the righteousness of God *as to a future state*. Declare that whatever Scripture speaks of the ungodly is true and that God is righteous in it. Never mind the quibbles and the inventions of this present age; God's character can never be harmed by these dreamers. Stand by your God and you may rest assured that time shall never change the essential truth that He is a holy and a righteous God and will justify His ways to men.

But the time has gone, so I have only to say this; there is no other righteousness worth talking about; if you will mention the righteousness of God, you will do much good. Make mention of the righteousness of God to convince men of their unrighteousness. Talk of it to win their admiration for the Lord Jesus. Oh, that everybody in this place knew how righteous the Lord Jesus was, not only in life, but in nature! Talk of the righteousness of God to show men the way of salvation. Tell them how the Lord laid our sins upon Christ, and that while He is infinitely gracious, He is infinitely just. Then go on to point convicted sinners to where righteousness is to be had. He that believes in the Lord Jesus shall find himself made of God's wisdom and righteousness.

Talk of that perfect righteousness, also, for the comfort of believers. Nothing will give them greater joy than to see how they are accounted righteous in the righteousness of Christ and, “accepted in the beloved”—

*“His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
‘Tis all my business here below
To cry, ‘Behold the Lamb!’”*

Here is a happy vocation for the remainder of our sojourn here below! Forever and only make mention of God's righteousness. To him be glory forever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 71.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136, 681, 674.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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